

1.37	<b>Home Office Agreements</b>	<b>Page 1 of 4</b>
Issue date: 5/13	Revision date: 10/13	Division Staff
Form(s): Home Office Agreement Form 304; Home Office Feasibility Worksheet Form 303		

**I. Directive Purpose:**

The Division of Services for People with Disabilities (Division) encourages the appropriate placement of Division employees in settings where they can be most effective and reach their maximum potential. Home offices are only appropriate when such an arrangement represents a measureable benefit to Division operations. This directive is intended to guide the Division Director and employee supervisors in determining when to approve a home office for an employee and what expenses can be reasonably reimbursed. This directive creates clear standards to be applied uniformly among Division employees regardless of the employee's work group.

**II. Policy:**

- A. Placement of an employee in a home office setting is entirely at the discretion of the Division and may be terminated at any time by the employee's supervisor or the Division Director.
- B. When determining whether the Division should approve a home office, the following will be considered:
  - 1. A home office should not be approved, unless there is a legitimate administrative reason, including but not limited to the following:
    - a. Geographical Considerations:
      - i. The Division cannot find a workspace for the employee; and
      - ii. The employee lives more than fifty (50) miles, from the nearest Department of Human Services (Department) office, and there is not another office space within 50 miles at which the employee could be placed;
    - b. The approval of a home office represents cost savings for the Division; or
    - c. The nature of the employee's position is such that the employee would not make effective use of the office space given.
  - 2. A home office should not be approved for positions which generally require the employee to be present at a Division or Department office location, such as but not limited to:
    - a. Supervisory Positions which require the ability to supervise and measure performance of Division staff at a specific Division or Department office location;
    - b. Positions which require access to other Division, Department, or Interagency staff on a regular basis;
    - c. Positions which require access to onsite systems or information on a regular basis;
    - d. Positions which involve interaction with the public on a regular basis; or
    - e. Positions, which because of their title or job description would encounter barriers to accomplishing required tasks on a regular basis, if approved for a home office.
  - 3. A home office should not be approved, unless it can be demonstrated that there is a measurable benefit to the Division.
    - a. In the event that cost savings, or other measureable benefit to the Division can be shown, a home office shall only be approved if:

- i. The employee wants a home office;
    - ii. A telecommute agreement does not accomplish the same measureable benefit to the Division or is otherwise not a feasible alternative.
- C. All home offices must be approved by the employee's supervisor and the Division Director.
- D. In the event that a home office is approved, the following standards must be in place to ensure productivity:
  - 1. The employee must ensure that there is an adequate work space that is separated from the rest of the household;
  - 2. The employee must ensure that there is an adequate and secure system in place for the storage of confidential files, if applicable;
  - 3. The employee must ensure that adequate adult and child care remains in place, such that the Division can be assured that the employee is not spending work time caring for the others in the home.
    - a. If the employee pays for child care services, the employee must submit monthly invoices demonstrating that adequate child care remains in place;
    - b. If child care is provided without payment, the child-care provider must sign the home office agreement where provided and indicate the number of child care hours provided per week;
  - 4. All employees who work at home, must be personally reachable by telephone and available to answer client, public, and supervisory questions when necessary during the employee's regularly set work schedule;
    - a. Changes to the employee's work schedule must be appropriately communicated and approved by the employee's supervisor;
  - 5. The employee and employee's supervisor shall develop a system for measuring employee's productivity;
  - 6. The employee must agree that Agency representatives may make reasonable inspections of the employee's home office, to ensure that the employee is meeting the standards for productivity;
  - 7. Employees who are on corrective action or disciplinary action are not eligible for placement in a home office setting. Home office settings are not recommended for probationary employees until they have completed all required new employee orientation and training and until they have achieved a successful level of performance in assigned job functions.
- E. All employees who work from a home office may be reimbursed reasonable expenses according to the following guidelines:
  - 1. Internet Service:
    - a. Employees are required to solicit up to three (3) bids, if available, from internet service providers. Those bids must be submitted to the employer's supervisor to ensure the option selected is one that best minimizes costs to the Division, while still providing the service necessary to meet the business need.
      - i. If an employee has an existing contract for internet service, the employee may submit that contract amount as one (1) of the employee's three (3) bids, and the increased installation cost of choosing another internet service provider will be considered when selecting the option that best minimizes cost to the Division.
    - b. If the employee initiated the employee's contract with the internet service provider due solely to the Division closing the employee's Division office, or the approval of the employee's home office, and the internet service is being used solely for state business purposes, the Division may reimburse the employee for 100% of the internet service cost.
    - c. If the employee had an existing contract for internet services before the closing of the employee's Division office or the approval of the

employee's home office, or if the internet service is being used for both business and personal use, the Division may reimburse up to 50% of the internet service cost, depending on the actual use reported.

- d. If the employee has bundled billing, the employee is responsible to identify the cost of the internet portion for the Division.
  - i. The Division will only pay the internet portion of the cost.

2. Telephone Landlines:

- a. Employees are required to solicit up to three (3) bids, if available, from telephone landline service providers. Those bids must be submitted to the employer's supervisor to ensure the option selected is one that best minimizes costs to the Division, while still providing the service necessary to meet the business need.
    - i. If an employee has an existing contract for telephone landline service, the employee may submit that contract amount as one (1) of the employee's three (3) bids, and the increased installation cost of choosing another telephone landline service provider will be considered when selecting the option that best minimizes cost to the Division.
  - b. If the employee initiated the employee's contract with the telephone landline service provider due solely to the Division closing the employee's Division office, or the approval of the employee's home office, and the telephone landline is being used solely for state business purposes only, the Division may reimburse the employee for 100% of the telephone landline cost.
  - c. If the employee had an existing contract for telephone landline services before the closing of the employee's Division office or the approval of the employee's home office, or if the telephone landline service is used for both business and personal use, the Division may reimburse up to 50% of the telephone landline cost, depending on the actual use reported.
  - d. The Division will not reimburse employees for both a state-paid cell phone and a telephone landline, without sufficient justification.
    - i. If justification for a telephone landline is approved, the Division may reimburse up to 50% of the cost for the employee to maintain a landline, depending on actual use reported.
  - e. If the employee has bundled billing, the employee is responsible to identify the cost of the telephone landline portion for the Division;
    - i. The Division will only pay the telephone landline portion of the cost;
3. Under no circumstances will the Division reimburse employees for television costs or extra services that are not reasonable or justified by business need.
- a. If an employee has the need for an air card or tethering abilities with the employee's cell phone, the employee and employee's supervisor shall carefully evaluate the business need and select the least expensive internet option that meets the business need.
    - i. The Division will not reimburse internet or telephone expenses that are unjustifiably duplicated.
4. Employees must keep copies of their home internet and telephone landline bills on file for at least one year for audit purposes.
5. All reimbursements shall be limited to a "standard maximum" of \$50 per month, or \$23 per pay period.
- F. Failure to maintain records as required, or violation of any of the guidelines set forth in this directive may subject the employee to repayment of Division funds, disciplinary action, and termination of the home office agreement.

III. **Procedure:**

- A. Employees wishing to participate in a home office arrangement must complete the Home

Office Feasibility Worksheet and send it to the employee's supervisor for approval.

1. An employee's supervisor is responsible to ensure that an employee's request for a home office arrangement is appropriate as per the guidelines set forth in this Directive, the Home Office Agreement Form and the Home Office Feasibility Worksheet.
  2. The employee's supervisor must sign the Home Office Feasibility Worksheet certifying that the employee's supervisor has taken all necessary steps to ensure that an employee's request for a home office arrangement is appropriate.
  3. The employee's supervisor must then send the completed and signed Home Office Feasibility Worksheet, along with a signed copy of the Home Office Agreement Form, to the Division Director for final approval.
- B. A Home Office Agreement shall be in effect for the duration of one (1) year from the initial date signed by the Division Director. At the expiration of that one (1) year, the employee and employee's supervisor must review the home office arrangement to determine the appropriateness of continuing the arrangement.
1. The employee and employee's supervisor must certify that an extension is appropriate by signing the Home Office Feasibility Worksheet and the Home Office Agreement where indicated and sending a copy of each to the Division Director to be reviewed and signed.
  2. If circumstances have changed to the point where the information in a previously submitted Home Office Feasibility Worksheet is outdated or has changed in any significant way, the employee and employee's supervisor must submit an updated Home Office Feasibility Worksheet, setting forth the appropriateness of continuing the home office arrangement.
  3. If a new Home Office Feasibility Worksheet is needed, the employee and employee's supervisor will also sign and submit to the Division Director a new Home Office Agreement along with the new Home Office Feasibility Worksheet.
  4. The home office arrangement must be reviewed in this way every year.
- C. Regardless of circumstances, the employee and employee's supervisor must renew the home office arrangement by completing a new Home Office Feasibility Worksheet and signing a new Home Office Agreement every three (3) years.